

MSS. E. 225.

M^R. JOHN ELIOT,
Called, Doctor of *Medicine*,
HIS LAST
Speech and **A**dvice
TO THE
W O R L D,

At his Suffering, *March 9. 1694.*

TIME will not allow me to give you or the World, a particular Description of my Life; but I shall endeavour (God assisting me) to give you and the World, a brief Survey of the most material parts of it.

In the First place, My Parents did most carefully, and diligently Educate me at Schools: where I was grounded in the Fundamentals of the Protestant Religion. After I had finished my Course at Schools, my Father and Mother in Law (my own

own Mother being dead some Years before did bring me along with them to Edinburgh, and put me to the University ; where I continued till I finished my whole Course of Philosophy ; and it is known to many in the World, that I did improve my Studies to the best advantage, as to what could have been judged external ; But at that time (and it is not without Regratre I speak it) I had my own secret Faults and privat Debauches ; which I covered with all the care imaginable, lest they might have been brought to my Fathers knowledge, whom then I had a fear to offend : never considering that the Eye of the Almighty was upon me, and that my most secret intrigues were not hid from Him. After this I prosecuted the Study of Anatomy, in this Kingdom, And then, to my infallible loss, I was withdrawn by evil Company, to act and commit things that were heinous in the sight of God ; and that not privately, but publikly, as if the Laws both of God and Man, had approven such base and unworthy Actions : For then I had begun to throw off the Fear, and Reverence I had always had for my Father (as thinking it a Childish thing), and consequently that Fear and Regard I owed to the great God of Heaven; and so gave my self to a more loose way of living than I had formerly done ; which occasioned great Grief to my Father, and many scandalous Reports, whereof some I do confess and acknowledge (and that with an hearty Sorrow) were too too true ; the real commission of them have been the source and fountain, from which all I have now met with, hath sprung.

My Father, after many private Rebukes, and pious Exhortations, found that nothing could prevail, nor no Argument was of that force, as to make me relinquish the Company I then haunted ; so to prevent farther Evil, he designed to send me Abroad : Which accordingly he did, where I continued for

Three

Three Years; in which time my Life was very remarkable, and that upon several occasions; which the brevity of time will not allow me to rehearse: But the Company I most conversed with were a Cabal of People, that went generally under the Notion, of Wits: Our ordinary Converse was Debates of a high Notion, viz. *The proving that there was not a God: The Irrationality of the Trinity, and Incarnation of our Blessed Savior;* And that the Scriptures were composed by a number of aspiring Brains, who designed to make the World subject to their captious Humour; and to be short, *That Religion was but a Fop-pry, and Religious Persons a number of Hypocrites and Sycophants;* thus was their Humour to express themselves of what was Divine; but I do not believe that they entertained these Thoughts for a Truth, for my own part I never did. In any other Discourse of Natural Things, abstracting from Divinity, they were most rational and pleasant: But to my Sorrow I am now sensible, that the entertaining of such Company, together with my former Sins, and the other Sins I then committed, (which were most grievous in the sight of God) was the reason that the Lord trysted me with a signal Misfortune, the Marks whereof are too visible to the World.

After the receiving of this Misfortune, so soon as Strength could allow me, I came for Scotland; where I was a considerable time in great Affliction and Trouble, my Father, nor few of my Friends not knowing where I was: During this my Affliction, I had some Convictions of Spirit, by looking back upon the Tract and former Course of my Life: but, to my great Grief and Shame, I acknowledge, that those Convictions continued no longer than my Afflictions: For at that time the Infirmitie of my Mouth was, by all appearance, perfectly Cured, and that without the least blemish: So that then I began to forget

The Convictions of Spirit I formerly had, together with the many Vows and Promises of Amendment I had made to God during my Affliction, and returned as the Dog to the Vomit and the Sow to the wallowing in the Myre.

But I had not many Days continued in this flagitious Course of Life, before I received a casual Stroke upon my Mouth, which rendred me more miserable than ever ; and then I found, to my sad experience, That God would not be mocked ; but as He is Righteous in all His Ways, so He is Just in all his Dispensations : Which made me (by reflecting upon my many broken Vows and Promises made to Him) cry out, Have mercy upon O God ! for against Thee, and Thee Only have I sinned, and done Evil in Thy sight. Thir Raptures and Motions of Spirit, did continue during the extremity of my Trouble : but as my Trouble began to be mitigated and asswaged, so these Motions and Raptures of Spirit did likeways gradually cease, which I was not altogether unsensible of at that time.

And fearing lest God might tryst me with a farther Affliction, I bended my Resolutions to an Married Life, as a Remedy against many Inconveniences : This Design was in a little time afterwards effectuat. Being Married, I lived a retired Life for some Years, wherein I had some Reflections and Convictions upon my former Course of Life, but, to my great Sorrow, they were short of what was needful. My Marriage was carried on and done, without the knowledge of my Father, which with other Circumstances of my Life, was the occasion of an open Breach betwixt us ; but by the Interposition of Friends and my Mother in Law (who is a good kind Woman) all Differences were taken away.

This being done, my Father and some particular Friends together with my Wife, did daily solicite me to take advice anent the

the Curing of my Mouth, which accordingly I did, and in order the e:o, came to Edinburgh, where I was several Months under Cure during whi h time my Wife did visit me twice. The first time I was extreamly Sick, the next time she came; I was pretty well recovered: There was nothing past betwixt us, but Love and Kindness, and in this manner we parted. It pleased God she Conceived with Child at that time: Yet notwithstanding I have never seen her since, which is near two Years. In this time I received two Letters from her, wherein she signified, she would not Co-habit any longer with me, she gave me no Reason for it, neither do I know any she could have since our last parting: As to the Infirmitiy of my Mouth she knew I had the same some Years before I Married her: but the Reason I judge is, she has thought that my Cure would be too expensive and I Judge it has been concertred betwixt her and some of her Friends, that this she should do, to be a hindrance of her paying the Cure; I shall pass this, and its my desire to God, that he may pardon her Sins, and make her sensible of her Error: For she hath been no small Instrument in bringing me to this deplorable End, as the sequel of my Discourse shall make more clear.

My Father at this time was under Trouble himself; beside I was ashamed to discover to him the Reality of the Matter, that my Wife had so Treated me, and my so necessitous Circumstances, in regard I had Married without his Consent. However by thir Actings of my Wife I was redacted to such Straits and Wants, that I was necessitat to apply to some of my Friends, whereof the deceast Mrs. Pringle was one, who Entertained me kindly, and was not wanting, as I thought, in truly commiserating my Condition. But she designed another thing at that time; which I could not then fathom; the truth of this I find now to my own Ruine.

This

This is the way and manner, I was brought to ingage in this unhappy Business, for which I now am to suffer: How this design was carried on, I have sufficiently declared to the World, especially to Their Majesties *Advocat* and *Solicitor*, and publickly in the *Criminal Court*: However you shall know that I was first employed by the deceast Mr. *Nicolson* and Mrs. *Pringle*, to Poyson the Wife of the said Mr. *Nicolson*, which I did undertake to do, and made them likeways believe that I actually did it, but had done it so dexterously that it would require some time before it had its desired effect. And I told them it would gradually spend her Body, so that the World could judge no other, but that she had Died of a Decay. Notwithstanding all this, I never so much as endeavoured the Acquaintance of the said Mistris *Nicolson*, as she her self hath Deponed.

The next thing I was employed in, was to affix a Design of Poysoning upon Mistris *Nicolson* and Mistris *Hamilton* her Sister. The meaning is this, That Mistris *Nicolson* and Mistris *Hamilton* should have desired me to give them such a quantity of Poyson, as would Poyson Mr. *Nicolson*, this I accordingly did at the desire of Mr. *Nicolson* and Mrs *Pringle*, I was likeways intreated by both Mr. *Nicolson* and Mistris *Pringle* to go along with them to their Majesties *Advocat*, where I had a formal Story of the pernicious Design the two Sisters had against the Life of Mr. *Nicolson*: Whereupon the said Mr. *Nicolson* consulted Their Majesties *Advocat*, how his Life might be secured, and the two Sisters taken Red-hand in their wicked Design (as he alledged) and accordingly my Lord *Advocat* drew a Draught of an Receipt, which the Sisters were to give to me Subscribed before two Witnesses, and this I was to have from the two Sisters, before I was to give to them the Poyson. After we were parted from my Lord *Advocat*, it was concerted amongst

amongst us three, viz Mr. Nicolson, Mistris Pringle and me; how the two Sisters Subscriptions should be got, and affixed to the Receipt, and Witnesses procured: Which was done some dayes after, in this manner. viz. Mr. Nicolson brought his Wife's Contract of Marriage to the House of Mistris Pringle, where her Subscription was counterfeited and affixed to the forged Receipt by the said Mr. Nicolson, Mistris Pringle being present; the Subscription of Mrs. Hamilton was counterfeited from off a Discharge, granted by her to the said Mr. Nicolson, her Name was also affixed to the forged Receipt by the said Mr Nicolson: This was that which was told me jointly by them both, at the delivering of the Receipt to me: So I procured the two Witnesses to Subscribe, their Names being filled up in the Body of the said Receipt. I likeways caused the Body of the said Receipt to be written by the Wife of one of the Witnesses, viz Robert Wishart, and I gave it to the said Mr. Nicolson, who gave back the same to me again with the Names of the two Sisters affixed to it, and then I procured the Witnesses to Subscribe.

This is the naked Truth, as I have formerly declared, and I take God to Witness, before Whom ere long I must make my Appearance, that I designed the Evil of none Living, neither hath there Evil happened to those persons against whom it was designed: For all my Design was to have my Straits & Wants supplied, without the prejudice of any person.

This Business being the thing for which I must now suffer Death, I must be so particular as to let you know, that I was the only person that made a perfect Discovery of this complicated Affair; which my Declarations, before Their Majesties Advocate and Solicitor, as likeways before the Criminal Judges in publick Court, doth sufficiently testify.

I did in that publick Court make an open Confession and
and threw my self at Mercy, I was found Guilty by an Assize,
without adducing any other probation, save my own Confessi-
on, for which I pleaded favour at the Judges Hands ; I received
some : But I expected that the Lords of Their Majesties Privy
Council, upon full Information, would have imitated the
Great G O D, *Who delighteth not in the Death of a Sinner,*
but rather that he should Repent and Live : For God, Blessed
for ever, will not Reject a Sinner upon his due acknowledging
of his Sins, and throwing himself at the Throne of His Mercy :
So I hoped that the Lords of Council, as gods on Earth, would
have shewn Mercy upon my ingenuous Confession, and throw-
ing my self upon their Clemency ; but the Great GOD, *Whose*
Ways are unsearchable, and past finding out, hath otherways
ordered it ; and so I take it from the Hand of God, and not from
M. n. And it is my earnest desire, that He may give me a Holy
Submission to His Will.

Now to the Glory of God, and my great Shame, I have gi-
ven you a short Narrative of my wicked and profligate Life, in
which I desire you may take notice of the many and different
ways, the most merciful God hath taken, to reclaim me from
my Sins and Wickednes : You may likeways observe, the ma-
ny Vows and Promises I have made to God, while His afflict-
ing Hand was upon me ; and likewayes the several Convicti-
ons I had ; but, as I have said, the Rod of Affliction
was no sooner removed, than my Vows and Promises were
forgot, and my Convictions ceased : But at last, by bringing
my Body to this Disgraceful and Untimely End, I hope God
in His Mercy hath found out a way to preserve my Soul from
Eternal Death ; for my Hope is in Christ Jesus : And as I be-
lieve in Him (Lord strengthen my weak Belief) so I expect by
His Blood and Merits to see God in Mercy. In all the Afflicti-
ons

(9)

ons and Troubles I have met with, and what I am now trysted with, I do from my Heart and Soul acknowledge the Goodness and Mercy of God, who notwithstanding of my many heinous and aggravating Sins, never drew the Sword of Justice against me; else I had not only been punished with all temporal Punishments, but I had, long before this time, been thrown into Eternal Ruine, from which there is no Redemption: So that, I hope, the Great G O D will make me a Monument of His Mercy, and not of His Justice. I earnestly desire that all persons may take narrow inspection of my Sins, which have brought me to be made a publick Spectacle, and that they may be earnest with God that He may give them His Restraining Grace, to preserve them from falling into the like: For tho' it pleased God to deal with me in Mercy, that I am brought to this publick place to be an Example, and a Warning to all Men; for it is justly to be feared, that after this so signal a Caveat, if any shall commit such like Sins, that God will draw His Sword of Justice against them, and cut them off in the midst of their Sins, and throw them into utter Darkness: From which, Good Lord deliver us.

You are to observe, that in the Description of my Life I do particularly mention my being singularly guilty of Two Sins. The First is, *Disobedience to my Parents*, which is a Breach of the First Command, in the Second Table of the Law: All of you should know, that there is a Blessing that attends the keeping of this Command; but as I have broken it, so I have deprived myself of the Blessing that attends it. But besides, I desire that all of you may take notice, that when I threw off that Fear and Obedience I owed to my earthly Father, I likeways threw off that Fear and Regard I owed to the Great God: And therefore I earnestly intreat all you young People, and that for the

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Love

Love of God, I desire you may seriously consider what dangerous Consequences attend the breach of this Command.

The Next is, That I entertained Company with a number of Men, who denied the Existency of God, mocked at the Trinity, and Incarnation of our Blessed Lord and Saviour; and told that the Scriptures were composed by a number of aspiring Brains, who designed to subject the World to their captious Humors; and in sum, that Religion was but a Foppery, and religious Persons, Hypocrites and Sycophants. The frequent Converse I had with those debaucht Company, had almost extinguished the true Conception I had of a God; but the only thing that interrupted this dangerous Opinion, was, That from my younger Years I had always private Converse with God, though imperfectly, it not being with that Sincerity as was requisite; yet I still payed a certain kind of Homage to that Supreme Being, and even at that time when I most haunted that Company: And if at any time I had omitted that Homage I gave to God, I could have no peace of Mind until I had discharged my self of that Duty, which was the Onely and Great Motive which hindred me from entertaining the dangerous Principles of these Men.

Yet notwithstanding their daring and blasphemous Discourses, there was one of them who told me, That he had occasion sometimes to be alone, but was afraid to continue so for any time: For he said, That he felt something in himself (this is his own Expression) that did strick him with such terror and horror, and threw him into such Melancholy Fits, that he was afraid to be by himself, and therefore sought all occasions of Company. This Gentleman was as roaring a Gallant as any the Age produced, but otherways as well accomplished as most Men. What may be the Ends of such Men is greatly to be feared; nay, even

even the worst: For I my self am too evident an Example of the same. I do therefore desire that all here present, and to whose knowledge this may come, may be earnest with God, that He may direct them in such a Holy Course of Life, as that they may not fall into the Company of such Men, whose Principles are attended with such dangerous & fatal Consequences.

There is one Thing that doth not a little trouble me, and that is, The neglecting the taking of the *Sacrament*, which I was never Partaker of, notwithstanding the false and malicious Stories and Reproaches that pass on me on that occasion: And I shall assure you, that the omission of that Holy Duty has been no small Mean in bringing me to a Scaffold: So that as you regard the Eternal Wel-being of your Souls, and desire to shun the Dangers that are before your Eyes, do not slight the Opportunity of taking the *Holy Sacrament*.

There are some here present and some absent, who have spoke most falsly and contemptibly of me, for which I forgive them and all Men (as I desire to be forgiven) yet I must tell you, you have not done like Christians: For whatever my Sins have been, you ought in Christianity to have spoke of me with Commiseration and Regrare for my Failings; and you should have considered, That it is the restraining Grace of God, and nothing in your selves, that hath preserved you from falling into worse. This I speak for your good, do not think I have any Resentments of what has been spoken of this nature.

There are likeways many come here to day, rather to Gaze than to take Example: But I Charge you and every one of you, in the Name of the Great GOD (before Whom ere many Moments I must make my Appearance) that you seriously consider what ye have heard this Day; and if you do otherways, remember I tell you, in the Name of the Most High, that it will

stand in Judgment against you: For I am perswaded, that God has not only brought me here for a *Punishment* of my Sins, but likeways that you and all others may take Warning and *Example* by me, and may be Edified by what ye have heard this day, so as that it may be a Mean of your Conversion and drawing nearer to God. That this may be the effect of what ye have heard, is my earnest desire to God: So that He may be as much Glorified in my Death, as He has been Dishonoured in my Life. Thus wishing the Lord to give you a true Repentance, and saving Fath in Christ Jesus, I shall conclude with the Publican in the Gospel, *God have Mercy upon me a poor Sinner.*

John Eliot.

Post-script.

IN Regard of the wicked Practices of my Life, and that I have had frequent Converse with debauched Company I think my self obliged (lest there might be Mistakes) to give you a brief Account of my Fath, which is this: *I Believe God is; and that in Commiseration of fallen Man, He sent the Son of his Love Christ Jesus into the World, who took upon him Humane Nature: I do believe that he subjected himself to Death; and by that Sacrifice made Atonement for all those that should sincerely believe in him: I do also believe, that he arose again from the Dead, and that he now sits at the right Hand of God the Father, and that he is making continual Intercession for Sinners. I believe that there is a communion of Saints, and that there is a future State: And I believe that God will reward the*

the Good and punish the Bad: I believe in the Holy Ghost, and that there is forgiveness of Sins: In summ, I believe all that is contained in the Apostolick Creed, and on this I venture my Salvation: For by the sincere believing of this, together with a previous Repentance, I hope to see God in Mercy.

You all see of what importance this Belief is; so I intreat you again and again to be earnest with God to give you a true Repentance (for it is the Gift of God) and then a saving Faith in Christ Jesus; except you endeavour this, you can never expect to be partakers of those Eternal Mansions of Bliss, that are prepared for all those that sincerely believe in Him.

There is one thing I had forgot, Which is, that one of the Witnessees, viz Mr Joseph Cleland, denied his Subscription in publick Court upon Oath, but I take God to Witness I did see him Subscribe Witnes to the forged Receipt, this I have declared as I am a dying Man, for Exoneration of my Conscience, and that it may be a mean of his Conviction,

I cannot omit to tell how Mr Nicolson and Misstris Pringle took all possible wayes, since my coming to prison to perswade me to load my self with the whole Guilt, and for this end they gave me innumerable fair promises, and Bonds to the value of five thousand Marks; besides innumerable other things, And with all told me it was the only way to preserve their lives and my own. For in me it would be thought no other thing than a pretty invention to supply my wants, but in them it would be thought a most atrocious and notorious Crime, and that unless I took the Guilt upon me they would inevitably perish. By such like Arguments, I consented to their desire, and accordingly Mr Nicolson and I concert a Counter- Declaration, which I emitted as come only from my self, and instigated so to do by a remorse of Conscience

ence (as I pretended, Lord pardon me for it) I do publickly declare, the said Declaration to be false and an untruth.

My friends Kindness has been so singular and signal to me on this occasion, that I cannot pass it with silence: For they have not only taken all lawful means to preserve my Life, but they have also taken all Christian measures and methods to preserve my Soul, for which I do here publickly intreat the Almighty God to reward them with his choicest Blessings here and Eternal Bliss hereafter.

Now I bid you all heartily *Adieu*, and again and again I desire that you may imprint on your Hearts what you have heard and seen this day, which if you do, as I earnestly desire, so I hope the Great GOD will make it a Mean of your Eternal Good. *Lord remember me in Mercy, for my time draweth nigh*
So I end with the Psalmist, Hid not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble; Hear me speedily; draw nigh to my Soul and redeem it, Make hast O GOD! to deliver me, make hast to help me O LORD! for I am poor and needy, make hast unto me O GOD! Thou art my help and my deliverer, O LORD make no tarrying. Into thy hands I commend my Spirit.

John Eliot,

EDINBURGH,

Printed by George Mosman, and are to be Sold at his Shop in
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Advertisement.

THe before going Speech was all Written by Mr. John Eliot his own Hand, and many Copies thereof Subscribed by him, before his Execution: And this Copy was publickly Read upon the Scafold, in his presence, and by his Order, and Owned and Acknowledged by him to be True in every Circumstance, and as such he delivered Subscribed Copies to severals: And this Copy was sent to Sir James Steuart, Their Majesties Advocate, and printed by Allowance under Written.

Edinburgh, The Tenth Day of March;
One Thousand; Six Hundred and Ninety
Four Years; Allows this Speech of John
Eliot to be Printed.

Polwart.
Ja. Steuart:

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